

# **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

## ***Office of the Governor***

Timothy M. Kaine  
Governor

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### **Governor Kaine Announces Grants to Advance Coalfields Expressway – Two grants valued at \$5 million each to speed construction of Hawk's Nest and Rockhouse sections –**

**ABINGDON** – Governor Timothy M. Kaine today announced two \$5 million Transportation Partnership Opportunity Fund grants for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to advance construction of two sections of the Coalfields Expressway in southwestern Virginia.

“The Coalfields Expressway comes closer to being a reality today,” Governor Kaine said. “These two grants, coupled with potential federal funds, will allow us to advance this much-anticipated project for Virginia.”

The first \$5 million grant will go toward establishing a rough grade roadbed for the Hawk’s Nest portion of the expressway, which is located adjacent to the proposed Route 460 Connector interchange and Route 614 in Buchanan County. The second \$5 million grant will go toward establishing a rough grade roadbed for a portion of the Rockhouse section of the expressway, which is located between the West Virginia/Virginia border and Route 643 in Buchanan County.

Last week, Congressman Rick Boucher announced the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reinstated VDOT’s ability to request federal funds for the Coalfields Expressway.

“By reinstating federal funding for the Coalfields Expressway, many closed doors reopened to the expressway,” Congressman Boucher said. “This possibility enables us to further solidify the project and the federal relationship with Virginia and these private sector partners.”

“Today’s announcement is a testament to the hard work put in over the last 18 months by local and state leaders, private industry and VDOT to find innovative solutions to move this project forward,” said Jim Bowie, Bristol District representative on the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

The Coalfields Expressway – U.S. Route 121 – is a proposed four-lane highway stretching 51 miles from Pound in Wise County through Dickenson and Buchanan counties to the West Virginia line. It will provide a modern, safe and efficient highway through the coalfields region of southwestern Virginia. It is expected that the entire multi-state Appalachian region should see a boost in commerce and tourism as a result of the Coalfields Expressway.

Designated as part of the national highway system, the new road will link Interstates 64 and 77 in West Virginia with Routes 23 and 460 in Virginia. # # #